

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2017 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 64

Fall Update # 11, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The 2017 fall chum salmon preliminary estimated total run size is 2,272,000 fish which is the second largest run since 1974, with the largest occurring in 1975. This level of abundance is sufficient to provide for escapements, subsistence harvests, with a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes.

The last portion of the fall chum salmon run bound for the upper Yukon River is heading across the U.S./Canada border heading to the spawning grounds in Canada. The Tanana River will have fall chum salmon moving upriver until well past freeze-up.

The coho salmon preliminary index run size of 288,000 fish is above the historical median of 198,000 fish through this date. Coho salmon are also present in the Tanana River at this time and have begun moving into the spawning grounds such as the Delta Clearwater River.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ADF&G, YDFDA

The project completed operations for 2017 season on September 10. The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through September 10 was 3,821.69, which is above the historical median of 1,923.23 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 10 was 784.40, which is above the historical median of 535.76 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The project completed operations for 2017 season on September 12. The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through September 12 was 6,430.97, which is above the historical median of 2,034.82 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 12 was 1,669.82, which is above the historical median of 1,111.91 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The mainstem sonar near Pilot Station completed operations for 2017 season on September 7. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 7 was 1,829,931, which is above the median passage of approximately 688,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through September 7 was 166,320, which is near the median passage of approximately 160,000 fish for this date.

Chandalar River Sonar/USFWS

The project completed operations for 2017 season on September 26 and the estimate was expanded through October 9 to represent the fish passage after project terminated. The preliminary cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate of 509,115 was well above the median expanded passage of approximately 221,000 fish for this project. The upper end of the biological escapement goal range of 74,000 to 152,000 was substantially exceeded.

Sonar Project near Eagle/ADF&G, DFO

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through October 1 was 385,000, which is well above the median passage of approximately 146,000 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) range after U.S. and Canada harvests above the sonar project are subtracted is 70,000 to 104,000 fall chum salmon. The upper end of the IMEG will be substantially exceeded.

Upper Porcupine River Sonar near Old Crow, Canada/DFO

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 30 was 66,000 fish. For comparison, between August 21 and September 30, the cumulative passage of 63,000 is well above the median cumulative passage of 26,000 for this same time frame.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar/DFO

The estimated passage of fall chum salmon through September 30 is 36,728 fish which is above the historical median of 20,755 for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal range for this system is 22,000 to 49,000 fall chum salmon and the low end was achieved on September 23.

Stock Identification

The fall season total chum salmon stock composition estimates from July 19 through September 7, that passed the mainstem sonar, consisted of 12% summer and 88% fall stocks. The fall stocks contained 38% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 25% Canadian and 37% Tanana stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategies

Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels in all areas of the Yukon River. Subsistence fishermen using four inch mesh or less gillnets may use an aggregate length of set gillnet not exceeding 150 fathoms in length, and drift gillnets not exceeding 50 fathoms in length. In the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A, drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet in length.

Current Management**Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, and 3 including the Innoko River:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 4 including the Koyukuk River (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Illinois Creek, which includes all adjacent tributaries and the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

Drift gillnet fishing is open in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A only (Stink Creek to the tip of Cone Point and includes Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk) for the remainder of the fall season.

Drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet in length.

District 5 including the Porcupine River (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek to the U.S./Canada border, including all adjacent tributaries and the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

*A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portion of Subdistrict 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River, between the western tip of Garnet Island and the Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit area are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Fairbanks.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B including the Old Minto Area (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Kantishna River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

*Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Subdistricts 6-C (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A reminder to fishermen that a personal use salmon fishing permit and a sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

*A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish in the Upper Tanana River Drainage.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing

The fall chum directed commercial fishery in Districts 1 and 2 ended by regulation on August 31. In accordance with the Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan, the coho salmon directed commercial fishing season opened in District 1 on September 1 and closed by regulation after September 10.

In the Upper Yukon, the department has identified an additional surplus of coho salmon available for a limited commercial harvest in District 6. In accordance with Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan, the coho salmon directed commercial fishing season in District 6 will open on October 1 and close no later than October 5.

The sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon in the fall chum salmon directed commercial fisheries is prohibited. Commercial gillnet fishermen can release live Chinook salmon or use them for subsistence purposes. Chinook salmon retained from commercial gear must be recorded on a fish ticket as retained but not sold.

Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers intending to operate in the Yukon Area must notify the department of their intent prior to operating by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Chena River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, Nenana, and Fairbanks):

Commercial fishing in District 6 will be open for one period from 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 3 until 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 4. Commercial fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets or fish wheels.

The preliminary cumulative Tanana River commercial harvest through September 30 is 20,558 fall chum and 7,910 coho salmon.

The preliminary drainagewide commercial harvest of fall chum salmon through September 30 is 488,481 fish and has eclipsed the previous record of 467,687 set in 1981. Currently, the preliminary drainagewide commercial harvest of 137,200 coho salmon is the second largest on record.

District 6 commercial fishermen should confirm their market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers must notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. All fish species harvested and not sold must be recorded on the fish ticket as “caught but not sold”.

Fishing schedules are available 24 hours a day at (866) 479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387.

If you have any questions, please call ADF&G in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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